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WITH this number THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER completes its tenth volume. A full index of the principal contents of the past year, covering Vols. IX. and X., will be found on the preceding pages. It requires but a glance to see the variety of subjects touched upon. That they have been well treated the steadily increasing circulation of the paper is the best proof.

WE are glad to find by a decision of the Patent Office, which concerns decorators and furnishers, that the authorities of that bureau have determined to refuse recognition of specifications of inventions which include vague general terms designed by in-

ventors to cover every possible modification of their processes, so checking the ingenuity of others, and subjecting users to unreasonable claims. This decision is encouraging to artistic and constructive skill. It is for the interest of the community that genius in these lines should be hampered as little as possible, and that those using patented articles should distinctly know what they are paying for. The Commissioner of Patents decides against such indefinite terms as "means," "mechanism," or "substantially as described," which may be construed to so broaden and expand the invention that everything in the art is covered, and other inventors and the public placed under unreasonable tribute. Applications must be approved as to form as well as merits. It is gratifying also to find that ten years have elapsed without the extension of a patent, the check to the system of extensions being given by the public protests made in 1877 against the action then taken in extending by seven years the patent on wood pulp. Wood pulp admits of being largely used for decorative purposes, both for wall moldings and furniture, but it was practically a monopoly for twenty-four years.

WE are indebted to the accomplished editor of the "Magazine of American History" for the sketch of the Latrobe corn stalk column published in this issue. It is full of suggestion for our decorative artists, who are too prone to go to other climes and older times for the motives of their work. Our own country is so rich in unused material that there is no reason for this artistic disloyalty.

AN imposing decorative iron façade erected in the Fifth Avenue from the designs of the eminent architect, Mr. George, is worthy of attention for its artistic treatment of the metal. Whilst intended to afford an amplitude of light, it has a solidity of appearance free from heaviness, and which contrasts with the spider-like tenuity of some iron structures. This is largely due to the style of decoration. The windows are the most striking feature, recalling somewhat the beautiful Moorish Ajimez windows so common in Seville, the lights being divided by detached shafts of great slenderness and delicacy, with moldings round the cusped heads and decorative capitals. The tiers of stories are variously treated, in columns, diaper work, and devices which emphasize the leading lines. Spandrels are adorned with conventionalized leaf foliage. None of this ornament appears as a mere attachment. Strap-work is judiciously introduced and bolts in workmanlike style. We mark here and there some rich interlacing of parts by strap-work and foliated bands. All the forms appear contributory to strength.

WHAT studies as to color and also the compounding of colors do not the productions of Japanese artists present? The eye is seldom at a loss for the color with which to complete a harmony, so close is their attention to the mutual influence of hues. So many of their individual colors contain all the primaries that nothing can well be wanting. The endeavor to match their colors will be found to require considerable experimental effort, particularly those compounds in which the primaries are strongly marked. The nearest approach we could get to one of the yellows was by mixing cadmium, chrome and king's yellow with Italian pink. The orange often seems to be made by printing one color over another. Where such is the case we have come near to it by mixing a purplish red with yellow. There is a red which is purplish in tone, with much blue in its composition. A bright orange red is apparently compounded of madder lake, vermilion and white. A light red employed to break the monotony of large masses of the deeper reds is most nearly ap-

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proached by mixing a yellowish red and French vermilion with a purple. The best imitation of some purples is obtained by mixing Prussian blue, madder, carmine and Indian lake. The compound blues are sometimes mixed with black and yellow reds, and frequently marked shades of green. Some of their greens are very powerful, often with a slight tinge of red. A broken green is apparently produced by mixing in about equal proportions an orange red and a green, and it may be best imitated by blending chrome yellow, French vermilion, Indian madder lake and Prussian blue. The Japanese use a light blue so weak that it often plays the part of gray, changing in apparent character according to the vicinity of strong colors, accounted for by its containing a trace of yellow and also a little red. So successful are the artists in their combinations that the colors averaged by the eye in a design which may contain twelve or more seem mutually to adjust themselves, due to their intimate knowledge of the influence of one color on another.

VARNISH as a gloss on a painted surface not merely protects it but gives depth and richness to the colors. This it does by scattering the white light downwards and upwards, as is shown by taking two different positions from which the colors will be all but invisible, presenting to the eyes merely a sheet of white light, which is dazzling when the rays of the sun shine on it. The colors beneath the varnish throw out their rays in all directions, relieved by it from a large portion of white light, which always interferes with clearness of vision in looking at objects. On highly polished wood varnish renders more apparent the grain and figures, the white light being thrown out of the way. White light being thrown off at a certain angle, the importance of the position given to a painting is evident. The varnish, if its full advantages are to be realized, must be good and well manipulated, otherwise a multitude of minute protuberances and depressions will scatter the light in all directions, the eye will be vexed by glare, and the colors will be wanting in depth of tone. One advantage of the process of rubbing in applying varnish is that it lessens the amount of white light—in other words, the glitter of finish.

THERE is a charm about bizarre compositions in metal in which the artist, working within due bounds, has indulged in a certain amount of capriciousness, as though to show how imagination can body forth forms unknown. Medieval artists particularly indulged in vagaries that led imagination through labyrinthine mazes or aimed at affording an endless play of light and shade. Nature herself displays countless fantasies in plant growth and color effects aerial and terrestrial. These appeal to the love of variety and change inherent in the mind.

A MICROSCOPIC examination of the ground on which fresco pigments are laid shows a film of crystals, due to the absorption of carbonic acid from the water with which it is damped, converting the surface of hydrate of lime into carbonate of lime. The hydrate oozes out from beneath through this crystal film and penetrates the colors which are held in place by capillary attraction, but the colors must be applied before this exudation has proceeded too far.

BRIGHT metallic surfaces can easily be stained at an exceedingly low cost by means of a solution containing sodium hyposulphite and lead acetate (sugar of lead). By dipping in this solution articles of brass or gun metal, these can be colored to resemble gold, copper, carmine, chestnut brown, light aniline blue, and, lastly, a reddish white tint, according to the length of time they are kept in the solution, the colors possessing a fine lustre and admitting of being cleansed by nitric acid or some alkali. Dissolve in thirteen ounces of water 640 grains of sodium hyposulphite, and again 685 grains of sugar of lead in seven and a half ounces of water. Mix the two solutions and heat the mix-

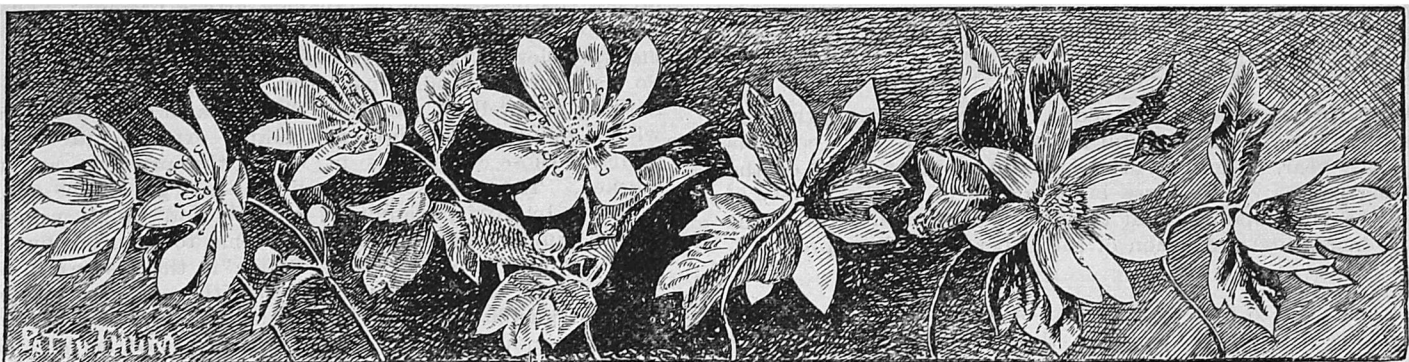
ture to from 190° to 199° Fahrenheit. As soon as a flocculent precipitate of black lead sulphide begins to form plunge the metal article in, maintaining the heat. Iron subjected to this process becomes steel blue, and zinc becomes brown. If sulphuric acid is used instead of the lead acetate, additional water in such case being added, gun or bronze metal, according to the length of time during which its surface is exposed, will become first red, then green, and, lastly, of a beautiful green red. Metal like wood is permeated by pores, and as in staining wood, the preparation enters those pores. The effect of heat is to expand the metal pores, and so more fully admit the preparation, whilst the withdrawal of the artificial heat causes the pores to contract. In the West large quantities of furniture are stained by simply dipping them in a vat of color. The method was at first proposed as a joke, but the idea proved a utilitarian one. The painter is not called to stain metal, but all that concerns coloring is of interest to him. He can never know too much of the processes in kindred arts to those in which he is engaged. As all arts are in some way connected, valuable hints may thus at times be obtained. Michael Angelo throughout his brilliant career as a painter realized the advantage of having been a sculptor and the designer and executor of the celebrated gates of the Baptistry of Florence, the panels of which exhibit tableaux beaten out in metal, was a goldsmith. House painters who are good drawers and are ready themselves to compose a design, stand on clear vantage ground.

WE speak of textures of stuffs, but the same term is applicable to wall and ceiling surfaces. Of late the effects to be obtained by giving to a wall minute prominences, such as we see on a small scale in paper board, so as to multiply points of light and shade, has been taken into account by decorators, thus diversifying both the ground and the ornamental figures. By this means even leather may be closely imitated in the graining; the removal of an absolutely flat surface is a relief to the eyes, and better sets off the hues. Wall and ceiling moldings are being employed of less depth, thus removing the aspect of heaviness.

IN Flanders as early as the year 1200 the churchmen adopted a method of instructing the ignorant populace by miniature water color illumination, taking important subjects from Scripture. Each page would contain three designs in a row. The songs of the troubadours and metrical and prose romances were also themes for the artist's fancy. In the fifteenth century a great number of illuminators flourished in the Italian cities, and some of the most renowned fresco artists were engaged in the work. In the Low Countries the three Van Eycks, Roger de Bruges, Van der Goes and Hans Memling rivalled if not surpassed their Italian brethren. The passion for illumination was so great in that century that even medical diplomas and legal documents were adorned with it. The art received a severe blow from the invention of printing.

WOOD wall paper is cut to the thickness of paper, and by a peculiar process stuck on the paper, which serves as a protection against the influence of the walls on the graining and color of the wood. So delicate is the machinery for forming this veneer that two hundred leaves may be cut out of an inch square of maple wood, and one hundred and twenty-five out of wood of open grain, such as oak and nutwood.

THE combination for a new paper hanging design is a Marguerite frieze, the design being foliage, with starlings on the wing, the whole conspicuous for a fine perspective effect, accomplished by the use of sage and tea greens, which, with ground of fallen leaf, form the chief colors. The work is in the style known as outline and the birds are in gold. The body of the wall is the light colored green laburnum, with yellow blossoms, on a slightly purplish ground.



CALIFORNIA PASSION VINE, BY PATTY THUM.